

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AGR-20 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7332

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION

1. SOVIET SOURCES CONTINUE REPORT INSTANCES OF FOOD SHORTAGES IN VARIOUS AREAS OF COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH INFORMATION STARVED SOCIETY SUCH AS USSR THESE REPORTS OFTEN TEND TO BE EXAGGERATED, PERSISTENCE OF REPORTS AND LIMITED OBSERVATIONS INDICATE THAT SUBSTANTIAL AREAS OF COUNTRY EXPERIENCING AT LEAST SOME DISRUPTION IN SUPPLY OF FOOD.

2. ONE SOVIET MENTIONED THAT HE HAD HEARD FOOD SITUATION PARTICULARLY SERIOUS IN NORTH KAZAKHSTAN AND CENTRAL SIBERIAN REGIONS. HE NOTED THAT THESE AREAS HAVE EXPERIENCED SHORTAGES EVEN IN GOOD YEARS AND CONSEQUENTLY POOR HARVEST HAD PARTICULARLY HEAVY IMPACT THERE. ANOTHER SOVIET REPORTED VISITING VORONEZH ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO AND OBSERVING SERIOUS SHORTAGES OF FRESH AND PROCESSED MEATS. EVEN SAUSAGE (KOLBASA) WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY, AND LOCAL RESIDENTS TERMED POOR QUALITY SAUSAGE A REAL TREAT. ON THE OTHER HAND, SUPPLIES OF POTATOES, BREAD AND DAIRY PRODUCTS IN VORONEZH SEEMED STABLE. SOVIETS GENERALLY IN AGREEMENT THAT FOOD SHORTAGES AND RATIONING ALSO OCCURRING ALONG VOLGA AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED.

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3. SOVIETS REPORT UNUSUAL DEMAND ON MOSCOW FOOD SUPPLIES
RESULTING FROM LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE COMING TO SHOP FROM
OUTLYING REGIONS. MOST PEOPLE APPARENTLY BUYING LARGE
QUANTITIES (TWO TO THREE KILOGRAMS) OF BUTTER SINCE THIS
REPORTEDLY EXTREMELY SCARCE COMMODITY OUTSIDE MOSCOW. CHECK
OF REGIONAL COMMUTER PLATFORMS OF MOSCOW TRAIN STATION
MARCH 17 REVEALED EXTREMELY LARGE CROWDS OF PEOPLE HEADING
FOR HOME, MANY LADEN DOWN WITH PURCHASES OF FOOD PRODUCTS.

4. ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE CHECK OF TWO FARM MARKETS
MARCH 17 INDICATED SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED SUPPLY OF AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS COMPARED WITH SITUATION ONE MONTH AGO. MEAT IN
GENERALLY SHORT SUPPLY ALTHOUGH A SHARP INCREASE WAS NOTED
IN QUANTITY OF VEAL ON SALE, INDICATING A POSSIBLE RISE
IN SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE. IN ONE MARKET DEMAND FOR POTATOES
SUBSTANTIALLY UP OVER PREVIOUS VISIT, WHILE AT OTHER MARKET
GOOD QUALITY POTATOES WERE AVAILABLE AT 40 KOPEKS PER KILO
WITH ONLY MODERATE DEMAND. QUALITY OF POTATOES IN STATE
SUPPLY OUTLET SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THOSE AVAILABLE IN FARM
MARKETS.

DUBS

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